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ABSTRACT

Every year the state of North Carolina requires an English II writing test as part of the End of Course examinations. The purposes of the English II tests are to assess students' mastery of writing, application of grammatical skills, and achievement in literary analysis. This report contains information about the test performance of students in the Wake County Public Schools (WCPSS). The percentage of English II scores of 3.0 or higher for WCPSS students rose to 69.1% in 1998-99. This is much higher than the 1997-98 scores, and 4.8 percentage points above the statewide average of 57.7%. Three figures contain the writing examination prompts, the results for each school, and results for Wake County and other state school districts. (SLD)

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MEASURING UP

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1998-99 English Writing Test Results

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Wake County Public Schools

Evaluation and Research Department

MEASURING UP

WAKE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS EVALUATION AND RESEARCH DEPARTMENT

1998-99 English II Writing Test Results

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Background

Each year, the state of North Carolina requires an English II writing test as part of the End of Course (EOC) examinations (along with other subject areas which will be reported on later this year). The writing test is administered during the second semester of English II. EOC tests are aligned with the standard Course of Study in each of the areas tested.

The purposes of the English II tests are to assess students' mastery of writing, application of grammatical skills, and achievement in literary analysis. Although four types of writing (argumentative, descriptive, expository, and narrative) are assessed in each English II classroom, students responded to a common prompt and to one of several variable prompts that required them to demonstrate a variety of thinking and communicating skills.

This year, as last, the English II exam was given in three separate administrations (Fall 1998, March 1999, and April 1999) in order to offer traditional and block scheduled schools the opportunity to test according to their respective schedules. Each administration used different prompts (Figure 1) which were scored for content by two independent, trained readers using a six-point, focused holistic scoring method. One trained reader also scored the common prompt essay for conventions using an analytic method which assesses student proficiency in the areas of sentence formation, usage, mechanics, and spelling.

Figure 2 shows a summary of high school students' performance on the common prompt from the 1998-99 English II test. The column labeled ">=3.0" represents the percentage of students scoring at a level defined by the NC Department of Public Instruction as indicating "consistent mastery of course subject matter and skills." Students scoring 3.0 or higher are considered to be "well prepared for a more advanced level in the content area."

1998-99 Results Summary

The percentage of English II scores of 3.0 or higher for WCPSS students rose to 69.1% in 1998-99. This is much higher than the 53.1% in 1997-98 and is 4.8 percentage points above the statewide percentage of 57.7%. The state percentage increased by 11 percentage points (from 46.5% in 1997-98), while the WCPSS percentage increased 16 points.

Of the 14 schools included in last year's analysis, six schools increased the percentage of students scoring 3.0 or higher by 20 or more points. Athens Drive High had the highest percentage of scores 3.0 or higher (78.7%) while Wake Forest-Rolesville High showed the largest gain with a 36.9 percentage point increase over 1997-98. Broughton experienced a small decline of 0.2 percentage points. For an in-depth comparison, refer to Figure 3 for 1997-98 percentages by school.

After being scored on a 1 to 6 scale, English II scores are converted into four achievement levels. Level IV scores (4.0 or higher) are indicative of writing "in a superior manner clearly beyond that required to be proficient." In WCPSS in 1998-99, 24% of scores were in Level IV, versus 17% of scores statewide.

Figure 1: 1998-99 English II Writing Exam Prompts

Form	Prompt
Fall 1998 Form B	In many works of literature, an important character may be motivated by the desire to acquire wealth or power. From the novels, short stories, full-length plays, poems, biographies, and autobiographies you have read, choose one work in which an important character is motivated by the desire to acquire wealth or power. Identify the character. Using specific references from the work, explain how the character is motivated by the desire to acquire wealth or power, how the character's life is changed as a result of the desire to acquire wealth or power, and the overall effect of the desire on the work. The work you choose must be from world literature other than British (England, Ireland, Scotland, and Wales) literature and American (United States) literature. Give the title and, if you remember, the author of the work.
March 1999 Form C	Many works of literature are organized around the theme of cultural change. From the novels, short stories, full-length plays, poems, biographies, and autobiographies you have read, choose one work and explain how a character or a society reacts to cultural change, what the consequences are to the character or to the society, and the effect of the change on the overall work. The work you choose must be from world literature other than British (England, Ireland, Scotland, and Wales) literature and American (United States) literature. Give the title and, if you remember, the author of the work.
April 1999 Form D	Authors often use settings and details to create a dominant mood or atmosphere (overall emotional effect of the piece) in a work of literature. From the novels, short stories, full-length plays, poems, biographies, and autobiographies you have read, choose one work and identify the dominant mood. Using specific references from the work, explain how the setting and details are used to establish and illustrate the mood, the effect of the mood on the characters, and the importance of the mood to the overall work. The work you choose must be from world literature other than British (England, Ireland, Scotland, and Wales) literature and American (United States) literature. Give the title and, if you remember, the author of the work.

Figure 2: 1998-99 English II Writing Results

	# Tested	Value	>=3.0	6.0	5.5	5.0	4.5	4.0	3.5	3.0	2.5	2.0	1.5	1.0	0	Off Topic	Blank
State (all)	80,025	Number	46,148	149	211	1246	1755	10297	7930	24560	9743	16519	2397	4133	0	889	194
		Percent	57.7%	0.2%	0.3%	1.6%	2.2%	12.9%	9.9%	30.7%	12.2%	20.6%	3.0%	5.2%	0.0%	1.1%	0.2%
Wake (all)	5760	Number	3,978	8	22	137	226	1000	893	1692	659	760	137	183	0	32	11
		Percent	69.1%	0.1%	0.4%	2.4%	3.9%	17.4%	15.5%	29.4%	11.4%	13.2%	2.4%	3.2%	0.0%	0.6%	0.2%
High Schools																	
Apex	527	Number	334	0	2	7	18	72	110	125	77	70	13	25	0	7	1
		Percent	63.4%	0.0%	0.4%	1.3%	3.4%	13.7%	20.9%	23.7%	14.6%	13.3%	2.5%	4.7%	0.0%	1.3%	0.2%
Athens	366	Number	288	1	2	13	22	78	70	102	26	35	9	8	0	0	0
		Percent	78.7%	0.3%	0.5%	3.6%	6.0%	21.3%	19.1%	27.9%	7.1%	9.6%	2.5%	2.2%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Broughton	370	Number	223	0	0	2	14	49	53	105	60	50	14	16	0	6	1
		Percent	60.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.5%	3.8%	13.2%	14.3%	28.4%	16.2%	13.5%	3.8%	4.3%	0.0%	1.6%	0.3%
Cary	466	Number	338	0	0	18	15	77	97	131	49	53	5	17	0	2	2
		Percent	72.5%	0.0%	0.0%	3.9%	3.2%	16.5%	20.8%	28.1%	10.5%	11.4%	1.1%	3.6%	0.0%	0.4%	0.4%
E. Wake (all)	385	Number	237	0	0	1	5	31	68	132	61	61	6	10	0	9	1
		Percent	61.6%	0.0%	0.0%	0.3%	1.3%	8.1%	17.7%	34.3%	15.8%	15.8%	1.6%	2.6%	0.0%	2.3%	0.3%
Enloe	563	Number	434	5	8	39	67	128	67	120	38	56	15	19	0	1	0
		Percent	77.1%	0.9%	1.4%	6.9%	11.9%	22.7%	11.9%	21.3%	6.7%	9.9%	2.7%	3.4%	0.0%	0.2%	0.0%
Fuquay (all)	384	Number	239	0	0	5	6	54	39	135	49	76	11	9	0	0	0
		Percent	62.2%	0.0%	0.0%	1.3%	1.6%	14.1%	10.2%	35.2%	12.8%	19.8%	2.9%	2.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Garner	437	Number	313	0	1	2	3	73	69	165	55	52	10	6	0	0	1
		Percent	71.6%	0.0%	0.2%	0.5%	0.7%	16.7%	15.8%	37.8%	12.6%	11.9%	2.3%	1.4%	0.0%	0.0%	0.2%
Leesville	518	Number	387	0	5	19	36	119	92	116	58	55	6	11	0	1	0
		Percent	74.7%	0.0%	1.0%	3.7%	6.9%	23.0%	17.8%	22.4%	11.2%	10.6%	1.2%	2.1%	0.0%	0.2%	0.0%
Millbrook	364	Number	259	1	0	3	7	50	53	145	38	45	3	17	0	2	0
		Percent	71.2%	0.3%	0.0%	0.8%	1.9%	13.7%	14.6%	39.8%	10.4%	12.4%	0.8%	4.7%	0.0%	0.5%	0.0%
Sanderson	363	Number	270	1	2	6	9	73	64	115	39	36	5	11	0	1	1
		Percent	74.4%	0.3%	0.6%	1.7%	2.5%	20.1%	17.6%	31.7%	10.7%	9.9%	1.4%	3.0%	0.0%	0.3%	0.3%
S.E. Raleigh (all)	590	Number	400	0	0	15	10	123	72	180	59	88	23	16	0	2	2
		Percent	67.8%	0.0%	0.0%	2.5%	1.7%	20.8%	12.2%	30.5%	10.0%	14.9%	3.9%	2.7%	0.0%	0.3%	0.3%
Wake Forest	374	Number	251	0	2	7	14	73	39	116	48	60	6	9	0	0	0
		Percent	67.1%	0.0%	0.5%	1.9%	3.7%	19.5%	10.4%	31.0%	12.8%	16.0%	1.6%	2.4%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Alternative School																	
Phillips (all)	51	Number	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	2	22	11	8	0	1	2
		Percent	9.8%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	9.8%	3.9%	43.1%	21.6%	15.7%	0.0%	2.0%	3.9%

Note: The designation (all) means that multiple administrations (block and/or traditional calendar) are combined.

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Figure 3: 1997-98 English II Writing Test Results

	Total Tested	Value	>=3.0	6.0	5.5	5.0	4.5	4.0	3.5	3.0	2.5	2.0	1.5	1.0	0	Off Topic	Blank
STATE	79,694	Percent	46.5%	0.1%	0.0%	1.0%	0.8%	8.1%	5.3%	31.0%	11.7%	27.7%	4.1%	8.4%	0.0%	1.5%	0.3%
		Number	37041	56	30	809	652	6541	4307	24646	9312	22030	3230	6652	19	1195	210
WAKE	5,482	Percent	53.1%	0.0%	0.0%	0.8%	0.8%	8.2%	4.3%	35.9%	11.9%	25.9%	4.1%	7.5%	0.0%	0.3%	0.4%
		Number	2912	3	1	100	52	601	344	1811	654	1455	156	260	0	33	12
High Schools:																	
APEX	534	Percent	54.7%	0.2%	0.0%	1.7%	0.9%	9.7%	6.2%	36.0%	12.2%	27.9%	0.9%	3.6%	0.0%	0.6%	0.2%
		Number	292	1	0	9	5	52	33	192	65	149	5	19	0	3	1
ATHENS	409	Percent	55.5%	0.0%	0.0%	1.0%	0.2%	12.2%	9.5%	32.5%	13.4%	23.2%	2.2%	4.4%	0.0%	1.2%	0.0%
		Number	227	0	0	4	1	50	39	133	55	95	9	18	0	5	0
BROUGHTON	375	Percent	60.5%	0.0%	0.0%	2.9%	0.8%	13.3%	2.9%	40.5%	7.2%	23.5%	2.4%	6.1%	0.0%	0.3%	0.0%
		Number	227	0	0	11	3	50	11	152	27	88	9	23	0	1	0
CARY	470	Percent	55.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.4%	1.1%	13.4%	6.2%	34.3%	13.0%	25.3%	1.5%	4.5%	0.0%	0.2%	0.2%
		Number	260	0	0	2	5	63	29	161	61	119	7	21	0	1	1
EAST WAKE	354	Percent	41.2%	0.0%	0.0%	1.4%	0.0%	5.1%	2.8%	31.9%	10.5%	42.1%	2.0%	2.5%	0.0%	1.1%	0.6%
		Number	146	0	0	5	0	18	10	113	37	149	7	9	0	4	2
FUQUAY	339	Percent	59.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.3%	1.4%	8.9%	3.5%	44.4%	12.1%	19.9%	3.7%	5.9%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
		Number	201	0	0	1	5	31	12	152	39	68	12	19	0	0	0
ENLOE	534	Percent	75.1%	0.2%	0.2%	6.2%	1.5%	23.2%	6.2%	37.6%	5.2%	15.5%	0.9%	2.4%	0.0%	0.7%	0.0%
		Number	401	1	1	33	8	124	33	201	28	83	5	13	0	4	0
GARNER	376	Percent	44.9%	0.0%	0.0%	0.8%	2.7%	6.1%	9.6%	25.8%	22.6%	25.3%	3.5%	2.7%	0.0%	0.8%	0.3%
		Number	169	0	0	3	10	23	36	97	85	95	13	10	0	3	1
LEESVILLE	509	Percent	58.2%	0.2%	0.0%	4.1%	0.8%	15.9%	8.3%	28.9%	8.4%	25.5%	3.7%	2.9%	0.0%	1.2%	0.0%
		Number	296	1	0	21	4	81	42	147	43	130	19	15	0	6	0
MILLBROOK	444	Percent	45.9%	0.0%	0.0%	1.4%	1.6%	9.2%	7.9%	25.9%	14.2%	30.2%	3.2%	5.2%	0.0%	0.7%	0.7%
		Number	204	0	0	6	7	41	35	115	63	134	14	23	0	3	3
SANDERSON	424	Percent	59.4%	0.0%	0.0%	0.5%	0.7%	10.8%	10.6%	36.8%	13.0%	20.5%	2.8%	4.0%	0.0%	0.2%	0.0%
		Number	252	0	0	2	3	46	45	156	55	87	12	17	0	1	0
SE RALEIGH	265	Percent	43.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	4.2%	3.4%	35.5%	12.5%	27.2%	6.1%	10.2%	0.0%	0.0%	1.2%
		Number	114	0	0	0	0	11	9	94	33	72	16	27	0	0	3
WAKE FOREST	368	Percent	30.2%	0.0%	0.0%	0.8%	0.3%	2.4%	2.7%	23.9%	15.2%	40.5%	6.0%	7.6%	0.0%	0.3%	0.3%
		Number	111	0	0	3	1	9	10	88	56	149	22	28	0	1	1
Alternative School:																	
PHILLIPS	79	Percent	15.2%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	2.2%	0.0%	11.4%	6.6%	53.6%	8.3%	17.1%	0.0%	0.9%	0.0%
		Number	12	0	0	0	0	2	0	10	7	37	6	16	0	1	0

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